

TWO STATESMEN.

EDMUND BURKE was at least as imposing a figure in the last century as William Gladstone is in this. If there is some resemblance between them in fluency of speech, there is none whatever in the use they make of it. As orators they may, perhaps, be compared: as statesmen they have as little in common as Pitt and Thiers. Burke would have called Gladstone as Cæpefigue called Thiers, "*ce remueur stérile*." The first professed no motive of action but principle; the second prefers to use Burke's own expression, "the heresy of contingencies." It was the fate of both to discuss the same questions. Liberalism, which Burke called Jacobinism, and the relations of Catholics to the civil power, were as ardently debated in 1794 as in 1874. In their views of both subjects no two men differed more widely than Burke and Gladstone. All that the latter has lately said was familiar to the former, and scouted by him, with the lofty scorn of a great mind, as ruinously false. Burke seems to have foreseen Gladstone—as Bossuet predicted Dean Stanley and his school—and refuted him by anticipation.

Burke was a Protestant, as Mr. Gladstone is, but he was also a philosopher and a statesman, which Mr. Gladstone will never be. To the end of his life he will be humbly content to lead a faction, and canvas for votes. His latest manoeuvre, of which Burke was as incapable as of petty larceny, will not even attain the poor recompense to which he aspires. The Anglican 'Church Herald' only echoes the general sentiment when it says that "he has lost the confidence of the people of England, and no newly-hatched devotion to Orangeism or Bismarckism will change their opinions." Burke discussed the civil allegiance of Catholics as Mr. Gladstone has done, but with a deeper insight and a nobler purpose. The senseless anti-Catholic mania was in his day fiercer and more universal than in ours, but Burke, to whom the applause of fanatics and an ignoble party success were not the highest aims of human ambition, rebuked it with the disdain of a philosopher and the indignation of a patriot. Like Pitt, who "spurned the biggoted fury of Protestants," as Lord Stanhope relates, Burke only ridiculed the fretful impotence of persecutors, and reminded them of a truth which Bismarck and Gladstone will do well to ponder, that "he who fears God fears nothing else." (*Letter to a member of the National Assembly*). The maxims of both the Prussian and the English expostulator as to the supremacy of the State and the allegiance of Catholics were, in Burke's judgment, equally opposed "to any sound principles of legislation, or any authorised definition of law." "The Popery laws in general," he declared to be, "one of the leading causes of the imbecility of the country." (*Works*, vol. ix. p. 825). Our readers may be glad to be reminded in what terms the great Protestant orator of the last century handled both the religious and the political questions which absorb public attention in our own day. Some of them will, perhaps, learn with surprise that he reviews all Mr. Gladstone's allegations, and rejects them all.

And first as to the pagan doctrine of Bismarck and his English echo on the authority of the State in spiritual matters, and the right of coercing Catholics to obey it, even when in direct antagonism to the law of God and the admonitions of His Church. The very pretence, on the part of a State which had changed its own religion, seemed to Burke an intolerable absurdity. "If people once take a religion on the word of the State," as they did both in Prussia and England, "they cannot in common sense do so a second time. You confess" (by the so-called Reformation) "that you have been wrong. Why should I prefer your opinion of to-day to your persuasion of yesterday?" If the State has any right to dictate in such matters, Burke saw very clearly that there was an end both of mental freedom and human conscience. Perhaps he had read, as we have, of a certain German principality in which the whole population were forced to change their religion six times in fourteen years, with this unpleasant result, that after their religious ideas had been passed so often through an ecclesiastical sieve, they had been sifted to such impalpable dust that it has been impossible ever since to find in that principality any religious ideas whatever. "Veneration of Antiquity," continues Burke, is congenial to the human mind. When an ancient Establishment begins to persecute an innovation, it has all the prejudices and presumptions on its side. . . . Commanding to constancy it does nothing but that of which it sets an example itself. But an opinion at once new and persecuting is a monster; because, in the very instant in which it takes a liberty of change, it does not leave you (Catholics) even a liberty of perseverance." (*Tracts Relative to the Laws Against Popery*).

An old persecuted Puritan described the Anglican sect as "the Church that is planted in the blood of her mother." Burke knew with what fiendish barbarity the new Anglican Church persecuted both English and Irish Catholics, as long as the State suffered it to do so, and was not ignorant that, as Mr. Froude observes, "both Houses of Convocation urged Elizabeth to put Mary to death, being an idolator." He would have asked with Mr. Lecky, "what shall we say of a Church that was but a thing of yesterday,—a Church that was by profession the creature of private judgment, . . . which, nevertheless, suppressed by force a worship that multitudes deemed necessary to their salvation, and by all her organs, and with all her energies, persecuted those who clung to the religion of their fathers?" We have seen that Burke considered such a Church "a monster," but he thought, having no provision of Bismarck's to come, that such proceedings were closed for ever. "It is proper to recollect," he said, "that this religion, which if so persecuted it its members, is the old religion of the country, and the one established religion of the State, the very same which had for centuries received the countenance and sanction of the laws, and from which it would have been highly penal to have dissented." He was even so sanguine as to add, though he knew nothing of the cruel spirit of Liberalism, that "the idea of religious persecu-

tion, under any circumstances, has been almost universally exploded by all good and thinking men." People said, indeed, in his day, as Mr. Gladstone says in ours, that the Catholic religion, by its recognition of the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff, was inveterately hostile to "modern society." It is pleasant to see how Burke deals with this argument of Mr. Gladstone. "This old superstition," he says, "stating the objection with which we are now so familiar, 'is such in its principles that society, in its general principles, cannot subsist along with it.' And how did Burke judge this argument? 'Could a man think such an objection possible,' he replies, 'if he had not actually heard it made? An objection contradicted, not by hypothetical reasonings, but by the clear evidence of the most decisive facts, Society not only exists, but flourishes at this hour, with this superstition, in many countries, under every form of Government. And was there no civil society in all these kingdoms before the Reformation? It certainly did then exist; and it certainly then was at least as much to the advantage of a great part of society as that we have brought in the place of it."

Burke had not forgotten, as Mr. Gladstone seems to do, that "Catholicism," by the confession of Hallam and Lecky, "laid the very foundations of modern civilisation." To him, in spite of his Protestant prejudices, the Syllabus would have been little more than a series of Christian truisms. It was directed against impious and subversive maxims which Burke spent his life in combating, and especially against that agreeable delusion of "modern thought," which Carlyle ridicules when he says: "Intellect did not awaken for the first time yesterday, but has been under weigh from Noah's flood downwards: greatly her best progress, moreover, was in the old times, when she said nothing about it." Burke understood that not only civilisation, learning, and liberty owed their very being to the Catholic religion, and found their most indomitable champion in the Holy See, but that loyalty also—of which Liberals do not comprehend even the motive, and which they openly do their best to discourage in other lands—was as truly the product of that religion as faith and virtue. "These Catholics," said Burke, at the very moment when they were trampled under foot by English laws, "show every mark of loyalty and zeal in support of the Government." He was struck by this because, as he generously observed, "we ought to recollect the poison which, under the name of antidotes against Popery, and such like mountebank titles, has been circulated from our pulpits and from our presses, from the heads of the Church of England and the heads of the Dissenters." Such "inflammatory libels," as he had the courage to call them, and among which Mr. Gladstone's new expostulation finds its appropriate place, only made Burke say: "The King ought certainly not to give up any part of his subjects to the prejudices of another. So far from it, I am clearly of opinion that the Catholics ought to have been taken under the protection of Government." He saw that the only effect of such legal and polemical ruffianism was "to drive all religion from our minds, and to fill them with nothing but a violent hatred of the religion of other people." This great statesman saw further, as all men see by what is now doing in Germany and Switzerland, that to attempt to gag the Catholic religion, no matter under what pretence, is to stifle Christianity. "It is a great truth," he said, "and which in one of the debates I stated as strongly as I could to the House of Commons in the last Session, that if the Catholic religion is destroyed by the infidels, it is a most contemptible and absurd idea that this, or any Protestant Church, can survive that event." (*Letter to William Smith, Esq.*) And whereas Mr. Gladstone conspired with a blasphemous rabble to pull down the throne of the Two Sicilies, and grasped the hand, which Mr. Disraeli scorned to do, of the buccanier Garibaldi, Burke offered his felicitations to the Sovereign of Russia, because "your sagacity has made you perceive that, in the case of the Sovereign of France, the cause of all Sovereigns is tried: that in the case of its Church, the cause of all Churches." (*Letter to the Empress of Russia*) Such is the difference between a statesman, solicitous for the profit of society, and a mere politician scheming only for his own.

GERMANY AND THE CHURCH.

On the fourth of December (says the 'Tablet'), during a debate in the Reichstag, Prince Bismarck disingenuously insinuated that the attempt on his life was the issue of Ultramontane ideas. No doubt such insinuations serve a purpose. The higher administrative positions will be "weeded" of good Catholic officers; President Nordenflycht's dismissal being an example. The May statutes are being furiously enforced against the minor ecclesiastical authorities, arrests and imprisonments taking place every day. The "Association of the Apostolate of Prayer" has excited fresh wrath in the Government, for that Catholics should pray for their imprisoned pastors is an outrage on Rationalist decency. Of course, the "agitations," as they are called, are attributed to the influence of the Jesuits; for though the Jesuits are expelled from the country, they have left their good teaching behind them. On the fifth of this month Prince Bismarck repudiated all pacific intentions towards the Church, and gave as his pretext that the Head of the Church "urged on his clergy to break the laws." He did not add that the only laws which were broken were those which were made against the Church.

Some students fixed up a ghost and placed it on the staircase of a Troy newspaper office the other night, and then retired and waited developments. One of the editors came along, and didn't get frightened. He disdressed it, and now wears a fifteen dollar pair of pantaloons, a ten dollar vest, a seven dollar pair of boots, and an eight dollar hat, while one of the students goes about without a vest, and another roams through the less frequented streets wearing a very ancient pair of inexpressibles,